



Concept

The Arctic in 2045: a long-term vision

Wednesday 17 – Friday 19 February 2016 | WP1453

Context

The Arctic is as important as it is diverse. Whilst it is at the frontier of climate change and a region of global environmental importance, it is also the home and place of work to over four million people.

Despite the challenges, communities have thrived in these regions for generations and are skilled at managing the consequences of change. The Arctic is universally recognised as a well-governed space by Arctic states with clear and internationally recognised sovereign responsibilities.

Rapid technological as well as environmental changes are driving the economic and social development of the region. With reducing ice cover, the Arctic Ocean may become increasingly accessible to commercial activity, including shipping, exploration for hydrocarbons, metals and rare earths, and tourism. Sustainable economic development is the shared goal, but how best to ensure that increased economic activity and use of the Arctic's marine and coastal environments does not cause environmental damage remains an important issue. The short term future for some well-developed extractive industries looks different now to five years ago, presenting a different set of potential challenges.

High-level, intergovernmental coordination in the region is led by the Arctic Council, the primary forum for promoting good governance and cooperation between the eight Arctic states. Indigenous communities are at the centre of the Council's work through six representations from across the region, as well as observer organisations and non-Arctic states. The introduction of the Arctic Economic Council in 2014 emphasised the Council's belief in the central role of business for helping to foster sustainable development in the region.

In its 'Vision for the Arctic' document produced in 2013, the Council outlined key principles to guide the future activities of Arctic states: maintaining peace and stability; ensuring the welfare of Arctic citizens and indigenous peoples; promoting sustainable development; strengthening cooperation on environmental and civil security; addressing conservation needs; pursuing research and maintaining a strong Council. The international community has a long-term role to play in supporting the Arctic states to achieve that vision.

Using for context a number of different scenarios regarding the prospective characteristics of the Arctic in 2045, this Wilton Park meeting will offer attendees the opportunity to:

- examine the challenges to implementation of the values and principles of the Arctic

In association with:

Council's vision statement in a changed Arctic of 2045;

- examine the international avenues available to support the Arctic states and the Arctic Council in addressing these long-term challenges;
- assess and propose policy options for Arctic and non-Arctic states to consider over the coming years that could start to develop these avenues;
- consider and propose ways in which the Arctic states and the wider Arctic stakeholder community can most effectively work together to address long-term challenges.

Key policy issues

The context for the discussions at this event will be a set of hypothetical scenarios characterising the Arctic in 2045. Through these alternative scenarios participants will explore the different environmental, political, economic and social challenges that could arise between the present and 2045. Participants will then examine what policy options are open to the international community to meet the long-term challenges, in support of the Arctic Council's longer term vision. The aim is to provide a foundation for future policy development.

The evolution of the Arctic climate constitutes a foundational driver of wider change in the region. Our understanding, however, of the full extent and implications of climatic change in the Arctic is still incomplete. With a wide range of effects from climate change possible, it is not easy to predict what the impact of increased temperatures in the Arctic will be, within the region and beyond. Using the Arctic 2045 scenarios as context, the policy issues that the meeting will take up include:

- **Governance** – How will the Arctic Council develop between now and 2045? What role will intergovernmental organisations other than the Arctic Council play in 2045? What does the international community need to do to ensure coherence between these bodies in 2045? What gaps will arise and how should they be addressed? What will the role of observers be in 2045?
- **Security** – The Arctic is a peaceful region, but will geopolitical tension in other areas affect the region in the medium-long term? What will the levels of militarisation be in the Arctic in 2045? What do we need to do to ensure the Arctic remains an area of low tension?
- **Science and research** – How will international collaboration in science have developed by 2045? How could positive relationships between scientists and local communities have developed? What areas of the Arctic and Arctic science will be of most importance? What areas of research are important to focus on now in order to prepare for the Arctic of 2045?
- **Marine transit** – Where in the Arctic might increased shipping activity take place? How large-scale will these activities be? For which kind of shipping are these routes relevant? What will be the restraints on transit routes across the Arctic? What will the environmental impact of this shipping be? What does the international community need to do to prepare for increased shipping and when?
- **Tourism** – Where is there likely to be increased areas of tourism? By how much might tourism increase? What will the risks of increased tourism in the Arctic Ocean be? What role does the international community have a role in ensuring safe and sustainable tourism for the Arctic by 2045?
- **Extractives** – What levels of extraction could we expect in 2045? Where will access have improved and where will it be limited? How will extractives outside of territorial limits be handled?
- **Wider engagement** – What new opportunities will there be for businesses in the Arctic? What will be the relationships between Arctic communities and businesses?

How would mutually beneficial relationships be developed? How will non-Arctic states and organisations be supporting development in Arctic communities?

Intended outcomes

Wilton Park meetings provide a neutral, unofficial and off-the-record environment, where differing views can be expressed and discussed openly and frankly. This environment enables stakeholders to obtain better understanding of each other's perspectives, facilitates innovate thinking, and supports international policy development. Numbers are restricted to provide a highly participative framework with ample opportunity for networking.

The event will encourage and enhance relationships and potential networks between participants and forge links for prospective collaboration. The outcomes of the event will be reflected in a report summarising the discussions and recommendations for action, which will be then circulated among participants and the wider concerned community.

Format and participation

Wilton Park will host a meeting over 48 hours/two nights for around 50 participants, to debate and share perspectives on the issues outlined above in a neutral setting. The meeting will bring together policy makers from governments, plus select representatives from international organisations, businesses, and NGOs with an interest in the Arctic to explore what actions can be taken in the near future to help inform and positively shape long-term international policy for the Arctic.

The meeting will consist of a mix of scenario, plenary and breakout sessions, covering the issues outlined above. Brief introductory presentations given in plenary session serve to animate the subsequent roundtable discussion aimed over policy options and positions, in particular on how the wider Arctic stakeholder community can support the work of the Arctic states in the Arctic Council. Breakout groups will be able to delve deeper into specific policy areas and options.

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